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ARTICLES:

(1) Interview with Senator Joseph Lieberman, foreign affairs adviser to presidential candidate John McCain -- Reaching U.S.-DPRK agreement under Bush administration not possible; New multilateral organization to complement United Nations essential

U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman, an influential foreign policy adviser to Senator John McCain, the Republican presidential candidate, gave an interview to a Nikkei reporter in Tokyo on May 29. In the interview, the Senator indicated that chances are extremely slim for North Korea to reach a "complete, verifiable and irreversible agreement" on all its nuclear programs with the Bush administration before the President leaves office. He also expressed his desire to establish a multilateral consultative body complementing such organizations as the United Nations and the summit of major nations.

Lieberman, an influential legislator who is a member of the Democratic Party, has been close to McCain, as seen in his support for the Iraq war along with the Republican presidential candidate. Lieberman is regarded as the leading candidate to become secretary of State under a "McCain administration."

Senator Lieberman emphatically indicated that it is not enough to disable the nuclear facilities around Yongbyon for producing military plutonium. He said: "There still remain many issues, such as highly enriched uranium (HEU), the nuclear weapons that already exist in the North, and the question of proliferation of nuclear technology."

He added: "It seems impossible to seek something (agreement) that is comprehensive, verifiable, transparent, and irreversible in the next six or seven months before the Bush administration steps down."

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On Asia policy, he unveiled the following ideas: (1) strengthening relations with allies, such as Japan; (2) establishing a spontaneous multilateral alliance by such democracies as Japan, the United States, Australia, and India to complement the United Nations and the summit of major nations; and (3) taking a pragmatic approach by accelerating or starting nuclear disarmament talks with China and Russia.

Shifting the focus to the Middle East, the Senator expressed concern over Iran's assistance to radical Islamic groups. He also warned that a prompt withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq would end up intensifying such a trend. Pointing out that Iran has yet to abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions, he indicated that Israel or other countries might take military action.

Main points from statement by Lieberman

(Japan-U.S. alliance)

The alliance with Japan is the cornerstone of America's Asia policy. Sharing and maintaining such common values as democracy and the market economy benefit the two sides. The rise of China particularly requires the two countries to work closely together.

(North Korea)

The North Korean nuclear issue cannot be settled by the disablement of nuclear facilities in Yongbyon alone. The issue embraces a wide range of matters, including a nuclear program that uses HEU, the existing nuclear weapons, and the proliferation of nuclear technology. It seems impossible to seek something (agreement) that is comprehensive, verifiable, transparent, and irreversible in the next seven months before the Bush administration leaves office. Although the abduction issue is important, a balance must be struck (with the nuclear issue).

(Multilateral consultative organization)

Along with bilateral relations with such countries as Japan, Australia and India, the United States must strengthen multilateral relations. I am considering a spontaneous alliance that can complement the roles of the United Nations and other organizations when they cannot take action freely. Senator McCain thinks Russia

must be removed from the Group of Eight. Their concentration of power at the center is a problem. The idea of adding China to the G-8 as its formal member also seems premature.

(Middle East peace, Iran)

The United States must become proactively involved in the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks. The United States must firmly support the Palestinian autonomous government and especially cooperate in aiming at enhanced police and security capabilities. The most serious factor for Middle East peace is an expansionist Iran. Although Senator Obama says that the U.S. military should withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2009, such would only benefit Iran and the Al-Qaeda. Iran would not hold talks sincerely unless it can sense that the United States and other countries might take economic sanctions and military action.

(2) TICAD IV: Government develops aggressive resources diplomacy

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MAINICHI (Page 9) (Full)
May 30, 2008

The government is proactively developing diplomacy at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD IV), now being held in Yokohama City. Africa is attracting the world's attention for its rich resources, starting with untapped oil, natural gas and rare metals. Japan is visibly lagging behind China, which has been actively investing in Africa for many years. It is now doing its utmost to strengthen ties with African countries, seeing the TICAD Conference as the perfect opportunity, as a senior official of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) put it.

Marathon talks

METI Minister Akira Amari on the afternoon of May 29 pursued "marathon talks" with the presidents of five African countries, including South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. The main items on the agenda of the talks with those countries were resources development and technology aid for the promotion of development.

Africa is one of the few areas that produce rare metals, such as cobalt and platinum, materials used for the manufacturing of cell phones and automobiles. The amount of rare metal deposits in the world is limited. However, demand for such is increasing as newly emerging countries grow, bringing about a sharp rise in prices. The situation is seriously affecting Japan's industries. A major challenge for Japan is to secure resources, such as rare metals, by strengthening ties with African countries.

However, Japan is visibly lagging behind other countries in building relations with African countries. China, in particular, is actively strengthening ties with them, pledging a large amount of investment in talks with leaders of various countries. The total amount of its exports and imports vis-à-vis Africa in 2007 increased to approximately 73 billion dollars, or about six times the level of five years ago. In contrast, Japan's trade with African countries stood at approximately 26 billion yen. The margin of the increase is only 250 PERCENT, compared with five years ago.

In a bid to bring about a rollback, Japan at the TICAD Conference has come up with a number of measures intended to boost relations with African countries. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda released a plan to double the amount of investment in the region. METI Minister Amari also tried to appeal to African countries, noting, "Japan wants to double trade with Africa."

In concrete terms, Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI), an independent administrative agency under METI's jurisdiction, and public insurance agencies joined by African countries concluded an agreement for cooperation aimed at promoting investment in Africa. Japan and South Africa during a bilateral summit agreed to set up a joint trade committee. According to the agreement, the two countries will hold regular meetings more than once a year to discuss such

issues as boosting trade and investment and Japan's assistance for South Africa's energy-saving effort.

One senior METI official, who was present at Amari's series of meetings with leaders of various African nations, noted that he sensed a good response, saying, "Many sought stronger ties with Japan." Many African countries sought assistance for the

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consolidation of infrastructure. Their poor infrastructure is preventing their economies from growing.

The government also agreed to provide fund aid for the building of a port and an airport in Madagascar. In return, the country has pledged to offer a preference to Japanese companies regarding the mining and refining of nickel. The government wants to fully establish a reciprocal relationship for the stable procurement of resources, by helping Africa grow stably through proactive assistance or the consolidation of infrastructure, etc.

Consolidation of infrastructure

Leading trading houses are already active trying to find investment opportunities in Africa. Mitsubishi Corporation in 1998 took part in an aluminum refining business in Mozambique. The business expanded and now it accounts for about 20 PERCENT of that nation's GDP. Mitsui & Co. and Marubeni Corporation took part in a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project worth 140 billion yen in Equatorial Guinea. Sojitz Corporation has already secured interest in vanadium and other rare metals in South Africa.

However, in Africa, there are many areas where the political situation is highly unstable. These areas have many challenges to settle, including improving worsened public security and delay in the building of infrastructure. One employee at a leading trading house said, "There is a shortage of education facilities. It is not easy to secure personnel."

Mitsubishi Corporation has established a fund totaling approximately 2.6 billion yen as part of its contribution to the region. It is using the fund for the building of elementary schools, infrastructure and a police organization.

(3) Japan presents aid plans in succession at Africa conference to counter China

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Slightly abridged)
May 30, 2008

The 4th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD4) will end today after adopting three documents, including the Yokohama Declaration specifying the philosophy of aid to African countries and the Yokohama Action Plan spelling out measures and goals for aid over the next five years. The government believes that Japan succeeded in establishing a foothold to develop vigorous diplomacy toward Africa as a result of taking the initiative in producing a comprehensive aid package. But its real worth will be judged from now.

Representatives from 51 countries of all the 53 in Africa have participated in the 4th TICAD, including 40 top leaders. The leader of Guinea cancelled his planned visit at the last minute due to ongoing domestic political unrest. A senior Foreign Ministry proudly said: "The conference this time is at the largest ever scale among the international conferences held under the sponsorship of the Japanese government. This shows that Japan has won their confidence."

In preparations for TICAD, the Japanese government was keeping in mind China's boosting economic advancement to Africa with the aim of securing natural resources there. The China and Africa Cooperation

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Forum in Beijing in 2006, hosted by China, brought together the

heads of 35 countries. A Japanese government source said with a sigh of relief: "This (the number of participant countries in TICAD4) is a good showy number."

In the ongoing conference, the Japanese government has come up with proactive aid plans in succession, including a measure to double the government's official development assistance (ODA) disbursements to Africa over the next five years and to offer up to 4 billion dollars in yen loans. In a meeting held yesterday to discuss soaring food prices, Fukuda also stressed: "I promised to help Africa with improvement in plant species and other efforts in order to increase food and farm production. Japan is ready to make more contributions."

China's trade with Africa (in 2007) in value terms reached 73.5 billion dollars, three times larger than Japan's 26.6 billion dollars. Japan, which has continued aid to Africa since the first TICAD in 1993, seemingly had a sense of rivalry with China.

The measure to double yen loans is aimed to improve the environment for an increase in investment by building vast road systems and taking other measures.

Some observers, though, point out that a trick is hidden in the "4 billion dollars." In many cases of Japan extending yen loans, the government announces an amount worked out by deducting repayment money of past debts. But even repaid money is included in the 4 billion dollars.

On the issue of climate change, the Japanese government was willing to contain in the Yokohama Declaration the wording "a 50 PERCENT cut by 2050" at a target for reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, but it had to give it up in the face of a fierce reaction by South Africa, a major gas emitter.

Major aid measures announced by Fukuda in TICAD4

(Acceleration of economic growth)

- ? Extend yen loans worth up to 4 billion yen over the next five years for traffic and other infrastructure building.
- ? Develop natural resources by using Japanese technology
- ? Dispatch a government-private sector joint economic mission to Africa.
- ? Establish a fund to support the plan to double investment in Africa in the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and double the scale of financial aid to 2.5 billion dollars in five years.
- Guarantee direct investment in Africa and Japanese banks' loans to Africa.
- ? Allocate a considerable portion of emergency food aid worth 100 million dollars to Africa.
- ? Double ODA disbursements to and investment in Africa by the private sector in five years. Double grant aid and technical cooperation.

(Establishment human security)

- ? Double rice production in Africa in 10 years.

African countries seek business, rather than aid

In TICAD4, African leaders have called for expanded trade and investment. South African President Thabo Mbeki categorically said:

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"Aid is certainly essential, but trade is to support the future of Africa, and not aid."

Of the assistance measures set forth by Prime Minister Fukuda, African leaders have paid much attention particularly to such measures as improving trade insurance and establishing a fund to support doubling investment in Africa.

But many leaders have complained of Japanese companies' halfhearted posture toward advancement to Africa, as Botswana's Vice President Mompoti Merafhe said: "Africa and Japanese firms are only remotely related." Many are calling for a new relationship to be established based on business.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame said in an interview with Yomiuri Shimbun: "China's moves are active, but we rarely see Japanese businessmen."

President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, the chair of the African Union (AU), complained: "85 PERCENT of investment in Africa from Japan goes to South Africa and Egypt." Even if Japan augments direct investment in and trade with Africa, many countries in the region will not highly evaluate Japan if this biased state is rectified.

African leaders naturally have expresses appreciation for Japan's aid projects, including those to fight poverty.

A reporter of state run Burkina Faso broadcasting station, however, expressed this severe view: "I cannot be aware of any effect of overseas aid in our daily lives. I do not think the general people have placed high hopes on TICAD."

Some countries might disappoint Japan on UNSC reform

Prime Minister Fukuda has engaged in marathon talks with all the 40 African leaders who have attended the conference, as well as with people related to aid to Africa.

In the meetings, Fukuda has asked for their support for Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). By winning support from African countries, which hold one-fourth of all the seats of the UN General Assembly, the prime minister aims to add momentum to reforming the UNSC.

Fukuda held talks with 45 persons by the 29th, but their responses vary. Ghana president John Agyekum Kufuor expressed his positive support for Japan's bid, but Namibia President Hifikepunye Pohamba only replied: "I will study it in our home country." A government source said: "We have gained understanding or support from most of the countries, but few have expressed more penetrating support than their past words. Egypt, Algeria, Libya, and many other countries have said they cannot support Japan's bid because they cannot become permanent members. Some of them could betray Japan."

(4) Vacuum in Japan's defense-oriented policy now created due to Tokyo's decision to join treaty totally banning cluster munitions

SANKEI (Page 1) (Abridged)
May 30, 2008

Masato Kimura, Dublin

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(The Dublin Conference) of international disarmament talks under the Oslo Process, aimed at concluding a ban on cluster munitions by the end of the year, reached agreement on May 28 on a draft treaty totally banning cluster bombs, except for "newer smart bombs." Such smart bombs are capable of identifying targets to attack so that unexploded duds would not exist to pose a threat later to civilians. The draft treaty is to be formally adopted today, the last day (of the Dublin Conference).

Hiroyuki Noguchi

Cluster bombs have been viewed as a trump card for Japan to prevent enemies from invading the homeland, but an immediate, total ban on cluster bombs would force Japan to drastically reconsider its previous strategy and tactics, including its national credo of "sole defense-oriented policy." Japan eventually may try to buy a large number of newest cluster munitions (not subject to a total ban), but this would require an enormous amount of money. It would take Japan a decade to completely deploy the state-of-the art cluster bombs, but that would create a 10-year vacuum in Japan's defense posture. At present, although there is less possibility of invading forces landing in Japan, compared with the Cold War period, but national defense is not a matter of probability. The important factor in national defense is to demonstrate the state's resolve and then to create a deterrent force. It is agonizing to see non-combatants

killed or wounded by duds. That is the major reason for calls to totally ban cluster munitions. However, it would be likewise a tragedy if the security of the nation is endangered (due to the vacuum created by removing all cluster bombs).

The common factor among countries opposed to a total ban on cluster bombs is that they do not possess cluster bombs or they possess only old cluster munitions. Those countries' military calculation of enhancing their countries' safety by adopting a radical treaty is seen through their opposition under the guise of humanism. It is non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have led the discussion in the (Dublin Conference). They brought countries that possess no cluster munitions to the conference table and had them advocate their opposition to cluster munitions. In this context, an approach that was the same as during the debate at the International Whaling Commission (IWC) that was swayed by emotional views.

Nonetheless, the fact is that the Japanese government was inept in the talks (of the Dublin Conference). Japan at least should have insisted on adding to the draft treaty the condition that "cluster bombs should be used primarily to prevent forces from invading the country".

(5) Former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike in interview says Prime Minister Fukuda should adopt policies agreeable to the public

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
May 30, 2008

-- You are regarded as one of the potential candidates to succeed Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda.

Koike: My name is being tossed around without my permission. I'm very annoyed with that. I've been focusing on what kind of policies Japan needs for the future. I've been working on such issues as the environment, security, and social security in a comprehensive manner.

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-- The word "change" is now a buzzword in the U.S. presidential campaign and it has even been used as the title of a TV drama. What do you think are qualifications necessary for the leader?

Koike: I haven't seen that drama, anyway. I think the public always seeks change. Japan nor any other country can survive unless it is willing to change. Voters support anyone whom they think is qualified.

-- The Machimura faction to which you belong is the largest faction in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Koike: Because it is not that long since I joined the faction, I don't know about it well. I think former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi reduced the importance of factions.

-- Politicians are now actively on the move with an eye on possible political realignment. What do you think is the key to realignment?

Koike: Small government or big government, putting a distance between the government and the bureaucracy, and centralization or decentralization. I think the key to political realignment will be extremely basic issues.

-- It is noticeable that you are carrying out activities focusing on women such as the formation of a policy group along with Yukari Sato and Kuniko Inoguchi.

Koike: There are many approaches that can move society. I am now focusing on women from the viewpoint of changing our way of thinking. I think this country will become better if women stimulate (politics) as an "introduced species."

-- How do you view the current political situation with the Diet divided between the ruling and opposition camps?

Koike: It is similar to driving on both the right and left sides of the street. However, there are some good effects, such as Prime Minister Fukuda's proposed freeing up of tax revenues earmarked for road projects for general expenditures. So, the divided Diet is not always necessarily wrong.

-- What do you think of the Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) response?

Koike: Just inciting anxiety is not good for a party aiming at a change of government. The DPJ places top priority on the daily lives of people, but President Ichiro Ozawa always prioritizes political maneuvering. But Mr. Ozawa has not changed his policy of aiming at political change. His political belief has been consistent.

-- What should the prime minister do?

Koike: Before he is forced to do something, he should do what he believes in. Through such a way of doing things, he will be able to get more public support.

-- Do you think the prime minister is not good at appealing to the public?

Koike: Public support is necessary for coming up with policies. This

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is not populism. If the policy is agreeable to the public, it will be able to get their understanding even if it places a burden on them. With the graying of society, there will be more sad stories than happy ones. It is important to have the public understand that. The people know the necessity of protecting the nation and society (even if their burden increases).

-- Specifically?

Koike: The environment problem is a good example. Since people are aware of environmental preservation, they understand the charge imposed for plastic grocery bags and that the number of people using eco-friendly shopping bags has been increasing. I think public support will spread once (the government side) steadily introduces its policies.

(Corrected copy) Medical service system for elderly people over 75 a campaign issue for Okinawa Prefectural Assembly

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Excerpts)
May 30, 2008

The Okinawa Prefectural Assembly elections slated for June 8 will be officially announced on May 30. Both ruling and opposition camps are staging an all-out battle, airing TV commercials and sending in senior party officials. That is because since both camps are equally matched in strength, if the opposition parties win, the government of Governor Hirokazu Nakaima, who supports the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps Futenma Air Station within the prefecture, would become a minority government, which is bound to affect the relocation issue. In addition, the key campaign issue is the new medical service system for elderly people over 75, the focus of attention in the final phase of the ongoing Diet session.

The fixed number of seats in the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly is 48, of which 27 are held by the ruling parties -- the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the New Komeito, etc., and 20 are held by opposition parties. One seat remains vacant. There are many closely-contested constituencies due to mergers of municipalities. One LDP lawmaker elected from the prefecture expressed his sense of alarm, "The ruling and opposition are equally matched in strength. If the opposition camp wins, the Nakaima-controlled prefectural administration would be rejected by the public."

Okinawa Assembly election results will influence national administration of the Futenma relocation issue. This can be seen in a past prefectural referendum held to ask residents about the propriety of consolidating and realigning U.S. military bases. Because of such a background, both camps are tackling the election

in an exceptionally serious manner.

The LDP has made TV commercial on the medical service system for the elderly, featuring former LDP lawmaker Koichi Hamada (79), about making efforts to revise the system. It will be aired in Okinawa from the 30th. New Komeito head Akihiro Ota visited Okinawa from the 23rd through the 26th and delivered speeches, pledging a revision to the medical service system. Secretary General Kazuo Kitagawa also visited Okinawa to support the election campaign.

Among opposition parties, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) Deputy President Naoto Kan, Japanese Communist Party Executive Committee Chair Kazuo Shii, Social Democratic Party

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President Mizuho Fukushima and People's New Party President Tamisuke Watanuki will visit Okinawa on June 1 to give sidewalk speeches. Kan during a press conference yesterday said, "Elderly people are all strongly opposing the system. I want to make a public appeal on this issue as a key campaign issue."

SCHIEFFER